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**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

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*-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --*

## Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE _3_ MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.
- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on _23 May 2011_.

2a)☒ This action is **FINAL**.      2b)☐ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) _1,3-6,8,9,12-24,26-38,40-42,44,45,55 and 56_ is/are pending in the application.

    4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) _1,3-6,8,9,12-24,26-38,40-42,44,45,55 and 56_ is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

    Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

    Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

## Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

    a)☐ All   b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

      1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

      2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

      3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

    * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

1)☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2)☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3)☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
    Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

4)☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
    Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .

5)☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application

6)☐ Other: _____.

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Status of Claims*

1.      Due to communications filed 5/23/11, the following is a final office action. Claims

2, 7, 10-11, 25, 39, 43, 46-47 and 49-54 are cancelled. Claims 1, 4, 12-15, 17, 18, 21-

23, 27-29, 33, 38, 42, 48 are amended.  Claims 1, 3-6, 8-9, 12-24, 26-38, 40-42, 44, 45,

and 55-56  are pending in this application, and have been examined on the merits.  The

previous rejection has been modified to reflect claim amendments.

### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103*

2.      The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all

obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth

in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the

prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention

was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability

shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.


3.      Claims 1, 4-6, 8-9, 12-14, 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being

unpatentable over Kovlakas (US 20030089765 A1), and further in view of Williams et al

(US 7774284).


As per claim 1, Kovlakas discloses:

generating, at a postage-issuing computer system, a unique postage indicium in

response to receiving a request for a postage purchase transaction, ([0027] FIG. 5 is a

flow chart for the recording and upload transactions of postal security device 45 and

computer 47 of FIG. 3. In block 200 the print job begins, i.e., the printing of mail piece

21 including indicia 24. Then the program goes to decision block 201. Block 201

determines whether or not the print data is mail piece and postage information. If block

201 determines that the print data is not mail piece and postage information, the

program goes back to the input of block 201. If block 201 determines that the print data

is mail piece and postage information, the program goes to block 202. Block 202 will

encrypt and save information that "uniquely" identifies mail piece 21, including

information related to the mailer or personal computer meter such as the date and time

that indicia 24 is produced; the amount of postage indicated in indicia 24; the serial

number of postal security device 45 or the number that data center 48 uses to identify

computer 47, also, in Fig. 6, the mailer/meter identifier, and mailpiece identification data

are used to track whether the mailpiece has been mailed, which examiner interprets as

tracking capability, also see claim 9 of Kovlakas where it shows wherein the information

that uniquely identifies each mail piece comprises: a identification number that identifies

the computer that requested the production of the postal indicia)

storing information for the postage purchase transaction in a database coupled to the

postage-issuing computer system, wherein the information stored for the postage

purchase transaction includes the unique tracking identifier that provides the mail piece

tracking capability within the USPS and a delivery status associated with the unique

tracking identifier, (Fig. 6, [301], scan the unmailable postage evidenced mailpiece,

[0007] This invention overcomes the disadvantages of the prior art by providing a

method that will easily and automatically recover postage that has been debited to the

mailer's meter for mail pieces that are not going to be posted. The foregoing is

accomplished by *scanning* and extracting information from a postage-evidenced mail

piece that can be used to uniquely identify a mail piece and validate the postage

evidence. This information is then reconciled against centralized or distributed remote

logs of postage transactions and tracking information to determine if the mail piece has

already been entered into the postal mailstream and protected against fraud);

retrieving the information stored for the postage purchase transaction from the

database in response to the postage-issuing computer system receiving a refund inquiry

for the postage purchase transaction, wherein the information retrieved for the postage

purchase transaction from the database includes the delivery status associated with the

unique tracking identifier, ([0007] This invention overcomes the disadvantages of the

prior art by providing a method that will easily and automatically recover postage that

has been debited to the mailer's meter for mail pieces that are not going to be posted.

The foregoing is accomplished by scanning and *extracting* information from a postage-

evidenced mail piece that can be used to uniquely identify a mail piece and validate the

postage evidence. This information is then reconciled against centralized or distributed

remote logs of postage transactions and tracking information to determine if the mail

piece has already been entered into the postal mailstream and protected against fraud

Fig. 6, [305]-[308], shows extracting mailpiece identification data and as a result of

determining if the scanned transaction exists in the transaction log, determining if

mailpiece has been mailed, where examiner interprets the determination if the mailpiece

has been mailed as the delivery status, also, see claim 1 of Kovlakas)

refunding the postage purchase transaction based on the delivery status associated

with the unique tracking identifier, (Fig. 6, [311], issue credit for postage amount

scanned).

Kovlakas does not specifically disclose wherein the unique postage indicium contains a

unique tracking identifier to track a mailpiece delivery status within  the United States

Postal Service, but does disclose the use of the mailer/meter identifier and mailpiece

identification data (which is part of the unique indicium) to search the transaction log for

tracking information to determine whether or not the mailpiece has been mailed as

shown in [0007] and Fig. 6, and therefore suggest tracking identifier.

However, Williams et al discloses a postal return system in FIGS. 30a-30c.  Also,

in col. 56, line 52-col. 52, line 14, shows the creation of a System tracking number

which is linked to the Package Tracking Table, which further allows for the

determination of the specification of the tracking state of the package.  In addition, col.

43, line 59-col. 44, line 3 shows that "A System tracking number is a unique number

generated internally by the System to identify a particular package shipped using the

System. The Shipper inputs the Shipper's Parcel Specifications for the Subject Parcel.

Using each Shipper's Parcel Specifications, the System is programmed to access

databases containing information about each supported Carrier. Each supported Carrier

has a unique rating schedule, delivery and pickup rules and schedules"

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

applicant's invention to disclose wherein the unique postage indicium contains a unique

tracking identifier to track a mailpiece delivery status within the United States Postal

Service with the motivation of providing data within the postage indicium for tracking the

mailpiece.

As per claim 4, Kovlakas discloses:

receiving confirmatory delivery status information associated with the unique

tracking identifier from the USPS, wherein the confirmatory delivery status information

indicates whether the USPS has delivered a mail piece carrying; the unique tracking

identifier, (Fig 6, [308], this step determines if mailpiece has been mailed); and

updating the mailpiece delivery status associated with the unique tracking identifier in

the database with the confirmatory status information received from the USPS, (Fig 6,

[310], void the transaction in the transaction log if it is determined that mailpiece has not

been mailed)).

As per claim 5, Kovlakas discloses:

wherein the information stored for the postage purchase transaction further includes a

date and the unique postage indicium for the postage purchase transaction, ([0014]

Referring now to the drawings in detail, and more particularly to FIG. 1, the reference

character 11 represents a mail piece that has a recipient address field 12 and a sender

address field 13. A postal indicia 14 that was made by an electronic meter is affixed to

mail piece 11. Indicia 14 contains a dollar amount 15; the date 16 that postal indicia 14

was affixed to mail piece 11).

As per claim 6, Kovlakas discloses:

wherein the information stored for the postage purchase transaction further includes a

date, a time, a destination zip code, a service class, a postage amount, a mail piece

weight, and the unique postage indicium for the postage purchase transaction, ([0027]

FIG. 5 is a flow chart for the recording and upload transactions of postal security device

45 and computer 47 of FIG. 3. In block 200 the print job begins, i.e., the printing of mail

piece 21 including indicia 24. Then the program goes to decision block 201. Block 201

determines whether or not the print data is mail piece and postage information. If block

201 determines that the print data is not mail piece and postage information, the

program goes back to the input of block 201. If block 201 determines that the print data

is mail piece and postage information, the program goes to block 202. Block 202 will

encrypt and save information that "uniquely" identifies mail piece 21, including

information related to the mailer or personal computer meter such as the date and time

that indicia 24 is produced;).

Kovlakas does not disclose a service class or a mail piece weight, however,

Lewis discloses in col. 19, lines 5-18 "Additional information may be required such as

the Class of postage by which the mail piece(s) will be shipped and the method of

calculating the postage. The system may be established so that the user selects

Calculate Weight, whereupon the number of sheets of paper being mailed and a paper

weight (as indicated on the paper packaging (e.g., envelope, box, etc.)) are entered. A

suitable application will then calculate the total weight by referring to an algorithm

resident in the downloaded client software, for example, multiplying the single sheet

paper weight by the number of sheets indicated. The result is then added to the weight

of the packaging (e.g., an envelope) via a table look-up. The postage for that weight and

class is then determined and the list of addresses is updated." It would have been

obvious to combine Kovlakas and Lewis to disclose a service class or a mail piece

weight.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

applicant's invention to disclose a service class or a mail piece weight with the

motivation of including standard mailpiece data with the postage purchase transaction.

As per claims 8, 9, Kovlakas does not specifically disclose wherein the refund

inquiry is received from an account administrator that operates a user interface at the

postage-issuing computer system, however, Lewis discloses in Col. 25, line 46, a

system's administrator. It would have been obvious to combine Kovlakas and Lewis to disclose wherein the refund inquiry is received from an account administrator that operates a user interface at the postage-issuing computer system.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to disclose wherein the refund inquiry is received from an account administrator that operates a user interface at the postage-issuing computer system, with the motivation of providing an entity to take charge of processing.

As per claims 12, Kovlakas discloses:

refunding the postage purchase transaction in response to determining that the mail piece delivery status associated with the unique tacking identifier indicates that the USPS has not delivered a mail piece carrying with the unique tracking identifier; and denying the refund inquiry in response to determining that the delivery status associated with the unique tacking identifier indicates that the USPS has delivered the mail piece carrying the unique tracking identifier, (Fig. 6, [308]-[311]).

As per claim 13, Kovlakas discloses:

receiving confirmatory delivery status information associated with the unique tracking identifier from the USPS in response to the USPS processing a mail piece-the unique tracking identifier and reading the unique tracking; identifier carried on the mail piece, ((Fig 6, [308], this step determines if mailpiece has been mailed); and

updating mail piece the delivery status associated with the unique tracking identifier to

indicate that the USPS has delivered the mail piece carrying the unique tracking

identifier, reading the USPS  tracking ID on the mail piece, (Fig 6, ([310], void the

transaction in the transaction log if it is determined that mailpiece has not been mailed).

4.      Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kovlakas

(US 20030089765 A1), and further in view of Williams et al (US 7774284), and further in

view of Lewis et al (US 6233565).

As per claim 3, Kovlakas does not specifically disclose displaying the information

retrieved for the postage purchase transaction from the database at the postage-issuing

computer system in response to the refund inquiry for the postage purchase transaction,

however, Lewis does disclose a refund process where customer requests a full refund

and a display screen assists the customer in doing so as shown in Col. 17, lines 41-66.

It therefore would be obvious to combine Kovlakas and Lewis to disclose displaying the

information retrieved for the postage purchase transaction from the database at the

postage-issuing computer system in response to the refund inquiry for the postage

purchase transaction.

It would have been obvious to disclose displaying the information retrieved for

the postage purchase transaction from the database at the postage-issuing computer

system in response to the refund inquiry for the postage purchase transaction with the

motivation of providing a user with visual means to request and process a refund

transaction.

5.      Claims are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kovlakas

(US 20030089765 A1), and further in view of Williams et al (US 7774284), and further in

view of Whitehouse (US 6,005,945).

        As per claims 14, Kovlakas discloses:

refunding the postage purchase transaction in response to determining that the mail

piece delivery status associated with the unique tacking identifier indicates that the

USPS has not delivered a mail piece carrying with the unique tracking identifier; and

denying the refund inquiry in response to determining that the delivery status associated

with the unique tacking identifier indicates that the USPS has delivered the mail piece

carrying the unique tracking identifier, (Fig. 6, [308]-[311]).

6.      Claims 15, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 38, 45, 48 are

rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kovlakas (US

20030089765 A1), and further in view of Williams et al (US 7774284), and further in

view of Whitehouse (US 6,005,945), and further in view of Gordon (6,527, 128).

As per claim 15, Kovlakas discloses:

generating, at a postage-issuing computer system, a first unique postage indicium in

response to receiving a first request for a first postage purchase transaction, ([0027]

FIG. 5 is a flow chart for the recording and upload transactions of postal security device

45 and computer 47 of FIG. 3. In block 200 the print job begins, i.e., the printing of mail

piece 21 including indicia 24. Then the program goes to decision block 201. Block 201

determines whether or not the print data is mail piece and postage information. If block

201 determines that the print data is not mail piece and postage information, the

program goes back to the input of block 201. If block 201 determines that the print data

is mail piece and postage information, the program goes to block 202. Block 202 will

encrypt and save information that "uniquely" identifies mail piece 21, including

information related to the mailer or personal computer meter such as the date and time

that indicia 24 is produced; the amount of postage indicated in indicia 24; the serial

number of postal security device 45 or the number that data center 48 uses to identify

computer 47, also, in Fig. 6, the mailer/meter identifier, and mailpiece identification data

are used to track whether the mailpiece has been mailed, which examiner interprets as

tracking capability, also see claim 9 of Kovlakas where it shows wherein the information

that uniquely identifies each mail piece comprises: a identification number that identifies

the computer that requested the production of the postal indicia);

storing information for the first postage purchase transaction in a database coupled to

the postage-issuing computer system, a first date for the first postage purchase

transaction, and a first delivery status, (Fig. 6, [301], scan the unmailable postage

evidenced mailpiece, [0007] This invention overcomes the disadvantages of the prior art

by providing a method that will easily and automatically recover postage that has been

debited to the mailer's meter for mail pieces that are not going to be posted. The

foregoing is accomplished by *scanning* and extracting information from a postage-

evidenced mail piece that can be used to uniquely identify a mail piece and validate the

postage evidence. This information is then reconciled against centralized or distributed

remote logs of postage transactions and tracking information to determine if the mail

piece has already been entered into the postal mailstream and protected against fraud,

where a first delivery status  is represented by whether or not mailpiece has been

mailed as shown in Fig. 6, where the use of the mailer/meter identifier and mailpiece

identification data (which is part of the unique indicium) to search the transaction log for

tracking information to determine whether or not the mailpiece has been mailed as also

shown in [0007], also, [0014] Referring now to the drawings in detail, and more

particularly to FIG. 1, the reference character 11 represents a mail piece that has a

recipient address field 12 and a sender address field 13. A postal indicia 14 that was

made by an electronic meter is affixed to mail piece 11. Indicia 14 contains a dollar

amount 15; the date 16 that postal indicia 14 was affixed to mail piece 11);

retrieving the information stored for the first postage purchase transaction from the

database in response to the postage-issuing computer system receiving a refund inquiry

for the first postage purchase transaction, wherein the information retrieved for the first

postage purchase transaction from the database includes the first delivery status

associated with the first unique tracking identifier and the first date for the first postage

purchase transaction, ([0007] This invention overcomes the disadvantages of the prior

art by providing a method that will easily and automatically recover postage that has

been debited to the mailer's meter for mail pieces that are not going to be posted. The

foregoing is accomplished by scanning and *extracting* information from a postage-

evidenced mail piece that can be used to uniquely identify a mail piece and validate the

postage evidence. This information is then reconciled against centralized or distributed

remote logs of postage transactions and tracking information to determine if the mail

piece has already been entered into the postal mailstream and protected against fraud

Fig. 6, [305]-[308], shows extracting mailpiece identification data and as a result of

determining if the scanned transaction exists in the transaction log, determining if

mailpiece has been mailed, where examiner interprets the determination if the mailpiece

has been mailed as the delivery status, also, see claim 1 of Kovlakas); and


refunding the first postage purchase transaction in response to determining that the first

delivery status associated with the first unique tracking identifier indicates that the

USPS has not delivered a mail piece carrying the first unique tracking identifier, (Fig. 6,

[311], issue credit for postage amount scanned).

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Kovlakas does not specifically disclose wherein the first unique postage indicium

contains a first unique tracking identifier to track a first mail piece delivery status within

the United States Postal Service (USPS), but does disclose the use of the mailer/meter

identifier and mailpiece identification data (which is part of the unique indicium) to

search the transaction log for tracking information to determine whether or not the

mailpiece has been mailed as shown in [0007] and Fig. 6, and therefore suggest

tracking identifier.  However, Williams et al discloses a postal return system in FIGS.

30a-30c.  Also, in col. 56, line 52-col. 52, line 14, shows the creation of a System

tracking number which is linked to the Package Tracking Table, which further allows for

the determination of the specification of the tracking state of the package.  In addition,

col. 43, line 59-col. 44, line 3 shows that "A System tracking number is a unique number

generated internally by the System to identify a particular package shipped using the

System. The Shipper inputs the Shipper's Parcel Specifications for the Subject Parcel.

Using each Shipper's Parcel Specifications, the System is programmed to access

databases containing information about each supported Carrier. Each supported Carrier

has a unique rating schedule, delivery and pickup rules and schedules"

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

applicant's invention to disclose wherein the first unique postage indicium contains a

first unique tracking identifier to track a first mail piece delivery status within the United

States Postal Service (USPS), with the motivation of providing data within the postage

indicium for tracking the mailpiece.


Neither Kovlakas nor Williams et al specifically disclose the following, however,

Whitehouse discloses in the Abstract, lines 10-15, a database of information concerning

user accounts [plural], and also, in Col. 28, lines 21-23, general postal indicia based on

a plurality of user accounts, and also in Col. 25, lines 5-17, request a refund/issue a

refund.  It therefore would be obvious to combine the teachings of Kovlakas, Williams et

al, and Whitehouse to disclose the following:

generating, at the, postage-issuing computer system, a second unique postage indicium

in response to receiving a second request for a second postage purchase transaction,

wherein the second unique postage indicium contains a second unique tracking

identifier that provides the mail piece tracking capability within the United States Postal

Service (USPS);

storing information for the second postage purchase transaction in the database,

wherein the information stored for the second postage purchase transaction includes

the second unique tracking identifier that provides the mail piece tracking capability

within the USPS, a second date for the second postage purchase transaction, and a

second delivery status associated with the second unique tracking identifier;

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

applicant's invention to disclose the above limitations in an analogous art for the

purpose of showing that the postal service can deal with a plurality of postage purchase

transactions for a plurality of user accounts, and does not issue refunds for postage

indicia that was previously used.

Neither Kovlakas nor Williams et al nor Whitehouse specifically disclose

associating the information stored for the first postage purchase transaction and the

information stored for the second postage purchase transaction with a user account at

the postage-issuing computer system and that the first date for the first postage

purchase transaction is the same as the second date for the second postage purchase

transaction/a first delivery status associated with the first unique tracking number/to

track a second mail piece delivery status within the United States Postal Service

(USPS)/track the second mail piece delivery status within the USPS, however, in the

abstract, Gordon discloses that counterfeit indicia are identified through a comparison of

the stored information in the master log database with information scanned from the

mailpiece itself, and that counterfeits may also be detected by recognizing the multiple

occurrences of identical indicia.  It therefore would be obvious to combine the teachings

of Kovlakas, Williams et al, Whitehouse and Gordon to disclose associating the

information stored for the first postage purchase transaction and the information stored

for the second postage purchase transaction with a user account at the postage-issuing

computer system and that the first date for the first postage purchase transaction is the

same as the second date for the second postage purchase transaction.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

applicant's invention to disclose the above limitations with the motivation of determining

if multiple transactions are processed at a time.


As per claim 17, Kovlakas discloses:

receiving confirmatory delivery status information associated with one or more of the

first unique tracking identifier or the second unique identifier from the

USPS, wherein the confirmatory delivery status information indicates whether the USPS

has delivered the mailpiece carrying the first unique tracking identifier or another mail

piece carrying the second unique tracking identifier, ((Fig 6, [308], this step determines

if mailpiece has been mailed); and

updating one or more of the first mailpice delivery status associated with the first unique

tracking identifier or the second mailpiece delivery status associated with the second

unique tracking identifier in the database with the confirmatory delivery status

information received from the USPS, (Fig. 6, [310], void the transaction in the

transaction log if it is determined that mailpiece has not been mailed)

As per claims 18, 34, Kovlakas does not specifically disclose

Receiving confirmatory delivery status information associated with the first

unique tracking identifier in response to processing the mail piece carrying the first

unique tracking identifier and reading the first unique tracking identifier carried on the

mail piece, (Col.5, lines 32-33, and Fig 3B shows that delivery confirmation 254 is

affixed to label 251 on the package [where label 251 contains the unique code used for

tracking purposes); and

updating the first mailpice delivery status associated with the first unique tracking

identifier to indicate that the USPS has delivered the mail piece carrying the first unique

tracking identifier, (Fig. 6, [310], void the transaction in the transaction log if it is

determined that mailpiece has not been mailed).

As per claims 22, Kovlakas discloses:

refunding the postage purchase transaction in response to determining that the delivery

status associated with the unique tacking identifier indicates that the USPS has not

delivered a mail piece carrying with the unique tracking identifier; and denying the

refund inquiry in response to determining that the mailpiece delivery status associated

with the unique tacking identifier indicates that the USPS has delivered the mail piece

carrying the unique tracking identifier, (Fig. 6, [308]-[311]).

As per claims 21, Kovlakas discloses:

receiving confirmatory delivery status information associated with the unique tracking

identifier from the USPS in response to the USPS processing a mail piece-the unique

tracking identifier and reading the unique tracking; identifier carried on the mail piece,

((Fig 6, [308], this step determines if mailpiece has been mailed); and

updating the second mail piece delivery status associated with the second

unique tracking identifier to indicate that the USPS has delivered the other mail piece

carrying the second unique tracking identifier, Fig 6, [310], void the transaction in the

transaction log if it is determined that mailpiece has not been mailed).

As per claim 23, Kovlakas discloses:

generating, at a postage-issuing computer system, a first unique postage indicium in

response to receiving a first request for a first postage purchase transaction, ([0027]

FIG. 5 is a flow chart for the recording and upload transactions of postal security device

45 and computer 47 of FIG. 3. In block 200 the print job begins, i.e., the printing of mail

piece 21 including indicia 24. Then the program goes to decision block 201. Block 201

determines whether or not the print data is mail piece and postage information. If block

201 determines that the print data is not mail piece and postage information, the

program goes back to the input of block 201. If block 201 determines that the print data

is mail piece and postage information, the program goes to block 202. Block 202 will

encrypt and save information that "uniquely" identifies mail piece 21, including

information related to the mailer or personal computer meter such as the date and time

that indicia 24 is produced; the amount of postage indicated in indicia 24; the serial

number of postal security device 45 or the number that data center 48 uses to identify

computer 47, also, in Fig. 6, the mailer/meter identifier, and mailpiece identification data

are used to track whether the mailpiece has been mailed, which examiner interprets as

tracking capability, also see claim 9 of Kovlakas where it shows wherein the information

that uniquely identifies each mail piece comprises: a identification number that identifies

the computer that requested the production of the postal indicia);


storing information for the first postage purchase transaction in a database coupled to

the postage-issuing computer system, wherein the information stored for the first

postage purchase transaction includes the first unique tracking identifier that provides

the mail piece tracking capability within the USPS, a first date for the first postage

purchase transaction, a first destination zip code for the first postage purchase

transaction, a first postage amount for the first postage, .transaction, and  a first delivery

status associated with the first unique tracking identifier, (Fig. 6, [301], scan the

unmailable postage evidenced mailpiece, [0007] This invention overcomes the

disadvantages of the prior art by providing a method that will easily and automatically

recover postage that has been debited to the mailer's meter for mail pieces that are not

going to be posted. The foregoing is accomplished by *scanning* and extracting

information from a postage-evidenced mail piece that can be used to uniquely identify a

mail piece and validate the postage evidence. This information is then reconciled

against centralized or distributed remote logs of postage transactions and tracking

information to determine if the mail piece has already been entered into the postal

mailstream and protected against fraud, where a first delivery status  is represented by

whether or not mailpiece has been mailed as shown in Fig. 6, where the use of the

mailer/meter identifier and mailpiece identification data (which is part of the unique

indicium) to search the transaction log for tracking information to determine whether or

not the mailpiece has been mailed as also shown in [0007], also, [0014] Referring now

to the drawings in detail, and more particularly to FIG. 1, the reference character 11

represents a mail piece that has a recipient address field 12 and a sender address field

13. A postal indicia 14 that was made by an electronic meter is affixed to mail piece 11.

Indicia 14 contains a dollar amount 15; the date 16 that postal indicia 14 was affixed to

mail piece 11);

refunding the postage purchase transaction identified in the refund inquiry in response

to the delivery status indicating that the USPS has delivered a mail piece carrying, (Fig.

6, [308]-[311]).


Kovlakas does not specifically disclose wherein the first unique postage indicium

contains a first unique tracking identifier that provides a mail piece tracking capability

within the United States Postal Service (USPS), but does disclose the use of the

mailer/meter identifier and mailpiece identification data (which is part of the unique

indicium) to search the transaction log for tracking information to determine whether or

not the mailpiece has been mailed as shown in [0007] and Fig. 6, and therefore suggest

tracking identifier.

However, Williams et al discloses a postal return system in FIGS. 30a-30c. Also,

in col. 56, line 52-col. 52, line 14, shows the creation of a System tracking number

which is linked to the Package Tracking Table, which further allows for the

determination of the specification of the tracking state of the package. In addition, col.

43, line 59-col. 44, line 3 shows that "A System tracking number is a unique number

generated internally by the System to identify a particular package shipped using the

System. The Shipper inputs the Shipper's Parcel Specifications for the Subject Parcel.

Using each Shipper's Parcel Specifications, the System is programmed to access

databases containing information about each supported Carrier. Each supported Carrier

has a unique rating schedule, delivery and pickup rules and schedules"

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to disclose wherein the unique postage indicium contains a unique tracking identifier to track a mailpiece delivery status within the United States Postal Service with the motivation of providing data within the postage indicium for tracking the mailpiece.

Neither Kovlakas nor Williams et al specifically disclose the following, however, Whitehouse discloses in the Abstract, lines 10-15, a database of information concerning user accounts [plural], and also, in Col. 28, lines 21-23, general postal indicia based on a plurality of user accounts, and also in Col. 25, lines 5-17, request a refund/issue a refund. It therefore would be obvious to combine the teachings of Kovlakas, Williams et al and Whitehouse to disclose the following:

generating, at the postage-issuing computer system, a second unique postage indicium in response to receiving a second request for a second postage purchase transaction, wherein the second unique postage indicium contains a second unique tracking identifier that provides the mail piece tracking capability within the United States Postal Service (USPS);

storing information for the second postage purchase transaction in the database, wherein the information stored for the second postage purchase transaction includes the second unique tracking identifier that provides the mail piece tracking capability

within the USPS, a second date for the second postage purchase transaction, a second

destination zip, code for the second postage purchase transaction, a second postage

amount for the second postage purchase transaction, and a second delivery status

associated with the second unique tracking, identifier;

first and second delivery status

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

applicant's invention to disclose the above limitations in an analogous art for the

purpose of showing that the postal service can deal with a plurality of postage purchase

transactions for a plurality of user accounts, and does not issue refunds for postage

indicia that was previously used.

Neither Kovlakas nor Williams et al specifically disclose in response to receiving a first

request for a first postage purchase transaction, wherein the first unique postage

indicium contains a first unique tracking; identifier that provides a mail piece tracking,

capability, however, Gordon, in col. 4, lines 46-65, shows a request for postage where

Part of the processing of this request ensures that proper payment for the postage has

been received and Once the request for postage has been fully processed within the

postal authority 10, the cryptographically secured or plain text postage indicia is

transmitted 16 to the mailer and col. 5, lines 20-32 shows that, as part of the request 14,

the mailer 12 transmit recipient address information to the postal authority 10. The

postal authority 10 then associates the recipient address information with the indicia

created therein and stores this information in a master log database 20, and at this

point, the master log database stores the associated indicia and recipient address

information in an indexed fashion within the database, where the postage indicia

contains a serial or transaction number which may be utilized to index the master log

database.  It would have been obvious to combine the teachings of Kovlakas, Williams

et al and Gordon to disclose generating , a unique postage indicium in response to

receiving a request for a postage purchase transaction, wherein the unique postage

indicium contains a unique tracking identifier that provides a mail piece tracking

capability with the motivation of showing that unique indicium is used to track packages.


Neither Kovlakas nor Williams et al nor Whitehouse specifically disclose searching the

database for the information stored for the first postage purchase transaction and the

information stored for the second postage purchase transaction in response to the

postage-issuing computer system receiving a refund inquiry identifying; one of, wherein

the first postage purchase transaction or the second postage purchase transaction;

identifying the first postage purchase transaction and the second *postage,* transactions

as duplicative postage purchase transactions in response to determining that the first

date., the first destination zip code, and the first postage amount for the first postal

transaction are respectively identical to the second date, the second destination zip

code, and the second postage amount for the second postage purchase transaction or

only one of the first unique tracking identifier or the second unique tracking identifier

associated with the duplicative postage purchase transactions, however, in the abstract,

Gordon discloses that counterfeit indicia are identified through a comparison of the

stored information in the master log database with information scanned from the

mailpiece itself, and that counterfeits may also be detected by recognizing the multiple

occurrences of identical indicia.  It therefore would be obvious to combine the teachings

of Kovlakas, Willimas et al, Whitehouse and Gordon to disclose the above limitations.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

applicant's invention to disclose the above limitations with the motivation of determining

if multiple transactions are processed at a time.


As per claims 27, 42, Kovlakas discloses:

receiving confirmatory delivery status information associated with the unique tracking

identifier from the USPS in response to the USPS processing a mail piece-the unique

tracking identifier and reading the unique tracking; identifier carried on the mail piece,

((Fig 6, [308], this step determines if mailpiece has been mailed); and


updating the delivery status associated with the unique tracking identifier to indicate that
the USPS has delivered the mail piece carrying the unique tracking
identifier, reading the USPS  tracking ID on the mail piece, (Fig 6, ([310], void the
transaction in the transaction log if it is determined that mailpiece has not been mailed).



As per claim 24, neither Kovlakas nor Williams et al does not specifically disclose

associating the information stored for the first postage purchase transaction and the

information stored for the second postage purchase transaction, with one or more user accounts at the postage-issuing computer system, but Gordon discloses that counterfeit indicia are identified through a comparison of the stored information in the master log database with information scanned from the mailpiece itself, and that counterfeits may also be detected by recognizing the multiple occurrences of identical indicia. It therefore would be obvious to combine the teachings of Kovlakas, Williams et al and Gordon to disclose associating the information stored for the first postage purchase transaction and the information stored for the second postage purchase transaction with a user account at the postage-issuing computer system.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to disclose the above limitation with the motivation of determining if multiple transactions are processed at a time.

As per claim 26, Kovlakas discloses:

wherein the information stored for the first postage purchase transaction further includes-a first postage purchase transaction time, and the first unique postage indicium for the first postage purchase transaction, ([0027] FIG. 5 is a flow chart for the recording and upload transactions of postal security device 45 and computer 47 of FIG. 3. In block 200 the print job begins, i.e., the printing of mail piece 21 including indicia 24. Then the program goes to decision block 201. Block 201 determines whether or not the print data is mail piece and postage information. If block 201 determines that the print data is not mail piece and postage information, the program goes back to the input of block 201. If block 201 determines that the print data is mail piece and postage information, the

program goes to block 202. Block 202 will encrypt and save information that "uniquely" identifies mail piece 21, including information related to the mailer or personal computer meter such as the date and time that indicia 24 is produced;).

Kovlakas does not disclose a service class or a mail piece weight, however, Lewis discloses in col. 19, lines 5-18 "Additional information may be required such as the Class of postage by which the mail piece(s) will be shipped and the method of calculating the postage. The system may be established so that the user selects Calculate Weight, whereupon the number of sheets of paper being mailed and a paper weight (as indicated on the paper packaging (e.g., envelope, box, etc.)) are entered. A suitable application will then calculate the total weight by referring to an algorithm resident in the downloaded client software, for example, multiplying the single sheet paper weight by the number of sheets indicated. The result is then added to the weight of the packaging (e.g., an envelope) via a table look-up. The postage for that weight and class is then determined and the list of addresses is updated." It would have been obvious to combine Kovlakas and Lewis to disclose a service class or a mail piece weight.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to disclose a service class or a mail piece weight with the motivation of including standard mailpiece data with the postage purchase transaction.

Neither Kovlakas nor Lewis specifically disclose the following, however, Whitehouse discloses in the Abstract, lines 10-15, a database of information concerning user accounts [plural], and also, in Col. 28, lines 21-23, general postal indicia based on

a plurality of user accounts, and also in Col. 25, lines 5-17, request a refund/issue a refund.  It therefore would be obvious to combine the teachings of Kovlakas, Lewis, Gordon and Whitehouse to disclose the following:

wherein the information stored for the second postage, transaction further includes a second time, a second service class, a second mail piece weight, and the second unique postage, indicium for the second postage purchase transaction.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to disclose the above limitations in an analogous art for the purpose of showing that the postal service can deal with a plurality of postage purchase transactions for a plurality of user accounts, and does not issue refunds for postage indicia that was previously used.

As per claim 29, Kovlakas discloses:

request confirmatory delivery status information wherein associated with one or more of the respective unique tracking identifiers from the master tracking computer system; receive the requested confirmatory delivery status information associated with the one or more respective unique tracking identifiers from the master tracking computer system, wherein the confirmatory delivery status information indicates whether the USPS has delivered one or more mail pieces carrying the one or more respective unique tracking identifiers; and update the mailpiece delivery statuses respectively associated with the one or more respective unique tracking; identifiers in the database with the confirmatory delivery status information received from the master

tracking computer system, (Fig 6, see results of [308] (yes or no), and [310], void the

transaction in the transaction log if it is determined that mailpiece has not been mailed)).


As per claim 44, Kovlakas does not specifically disclose wherein executing the data

processing circuitry on the postage-issuing computer system further causes the

postage-issuing computer system to filter out the refunded postage purchase

transactions from the duplicative postage purchase transactions to prevent the filtered

postage purchase transactions from receiving multiple refunds, however, Lewis in col. 8,

lines 7-37 discloses "Referring also to FIG. 2, to protect the various components from

unauthorized access and intrusion, the PSP 4 is provided with an inbound network 110

and an outbound network 130. The inbound network 110 allows a customer 2n to

securely access the RSP web server 150. The outbound network 130 allows for the

secure exchange of financial transactions executed between the customer 2n and the

TPS 6 directly and/or indirectly through RSP 4. Network traffic in and out of these

networks is controlled by a conventional inbound router 112 and an outbound router

132, which will operate to filter out all unauthorized traffic. In addition, a firewall 160 will

be used on the inbound and outbound segments to examine each data packet

transmitted for proper authorization. The secured portion of the RSP web server 150,

i.e, that portion which is access protected by passwords to authorized/registered users,

will exist on a unique port 140 so that only traffic identifying that specific port 140 will be

accepted. The transaction server(s) 180 will exist on a unique internet protocol ("IP")

address(es) so that the outbound router 132 can filter out all traffic except to that

address. The transaction server 180 will also be configured to handle IP traffic only. The outbound router 132 and the firewall 160 will filter out all other Internet protocols according to industry standards for such firewalls. The PSP 4 also includes a series of data servers 170 (shown collectively in FIG. 2) that will be responsible for various dedicated functions. As the transaction server 180 receives a transaction request, the type of transaction is identified and processed using one of these servers as identified in the Table I below".  It would have been obvious to combine Kovlakas and Lewis to disclose wherein executing the data processing circuitry on the postage-issuing computer system further causes the postage-issuing computer system to filter out the refunded postage purchase transactions from the duplicative postage purchase transactions to prevent the filtered postage purchase transactions from receiving multiple refunds.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to disclose the above limitation with the motivation of getting rid of duplicate postage.


As per claim 30, neither Kovlakas nor Williams et al nor Whitehouse specifically disclose but Gordon discloses that counterfeit indicia are identified through a comparison of the stored information in the master log database with information scanned from the mailpiece itself, and that counterfeits may also be detected by recognizing the multiple occurrences of identical indicia.  It therefore would be obvious to combine the teachings of Kovlakas, Williams et al, Whitehouse and Gordon to

disclose wherein executing the data processing circuitry on the postage-issuing

computer system further causes the postage-issuing computer system to associate the

information stored for the plurality of postage purchase transactions with one or more

user accounts.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

applicant's invention to disclose the above limitation with the motivation of determining if

multiple transactions are processed at a time.


As per claim 31, Kovlakas discloses:

wherein the information stored for each of the plurality of postage purchase transactions

further includes respective dates and the respective unique postage indicia for each of

the plurality of-postage purchase transactions, ([0014] Referring now to the drawings in

detail, and more particularly to FIG. 1, the reference character 11 represents a mail

piece that has a recipient address field 12 and a sender address field 13. A postal

indicia 14 that was made by an electronic meter is affixed to mail piece 11. Indicia 14

contains a dollar amount 15; the date 16 that postal indicia 14 was affixed to mail

piece).


As per claim 32, Kovlakas discloses: wherein the information stored for each of the

plurality of postage purchase transactions further includes respective dates, respective

times, destination zip codes, respective postage amounts, and the respective unique

postage indicia for each of the plurality of postage purchase transactions, ([0027] FIG. 5

is a flow chart for the recording and upload transactions of postal security device 45 and

computer 47 of FIG. 3. In block 200 the print job begins, i.e., the printing of mail piece

21 including indicia 24. Then the program goes to decision block 201. Block 201

determines whether or not the print data is mail piece and postage information. If block

201 determines that the print data is not mail piece and postage information, the

program goes back to the input of block 201. If block 201 determines that the print data

is mail piece and postage information, the program goes to block 202. Block 202 will

encrypt and save information that "uniquely" identifies mail piece 21, including

information related to the mailer or personal computer meter such as the date and time

that indicia 24 is produced;).

Kovlakas does not disclose a service class or a mail piece weight, however,

Lewis discloses in col. 19, lines 5-18 "Additional information may be required such as

the Class of postage by which the mail piece(s) will be shipped and the method of

calculating the postage. The system may be established so that the user selects

Calculate Weight, whereupon the number of sheets of paper being mailed and a paper

weight (as indicated on the paper packaging (e.g., envelope, box, etc.)) are entered. A

suitable application will then calculate the total weight by referring to an algorithm

resident in the downloaded client software, for example, multiplying the single sheet

paper weight by the number of sheets indicated. The result is then added to the weight

of the packaging (e.g., an envelope) via a table look-up. The postage for that weight and

class is then determined and the list of addresses is updated." It would have been

obvious to combine Kovlakas and Lewis to disclose a service class or a mail piece

weight.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

applicant's invention to disclose a service class or a mail piece weight with the

motivation of including standard mailpiece data with the postage purchase transaction.

As per claim 33, the combination of Kovlakas, Williams et al, and Whitehouse disclose

all limitations as discussed with respect to claim 23  above.

As per claims 35, 45, Kovlakas discloses:

further comprising refunding the one or more duplicative postage purchase transactions

associated with the unused unique postage

indicia/wherein executing the data processing circuitry on the postage-issuing computer

system further causes the postage-issuing computer system to refund the one or more

duplicative postage purchase transactions associated with the unused unique postage

indicia, (Fig. 6, [311], issue credit for postage amount scanned).

As per claim 38, Kovlakas discloses:

requesting confirmatory delivery status information associated with one or more

of the respective unique tracking identifiers from a master tracking computer system

connected to the postage-issuing computer system through a communications link, (Fig

6, [308], this step determines if mailpiece has been mailed);

receiving the requested confirmatory delivery status information associated with

the one or more respective unique tracking identifiers from the master tracking

computer system, wherein the confirmatory delivery status information indicates

whether the USPS has delivered one or ore mailpieces carrying the one or more

respective unique tracking identifiers, (Fig 6, [308], this step determines if mailpiece has

been mailed); and

updating the mailpiece delivery statuses respectivelty associated with the one or more

respective unique tracking identifiers in the database with the confirmatory delivery

status information received from the master tracking computer system(Fig 6, [310], void

the transaction in the transaction log if it is determined that mailpiece has not been

mailed).

As per claim 48, he combination of Kovlakas, Williams et al and Gordon discloses all

limitations as discussed above with respect to claim 23, however, Whitehouse

discloses:

checking for a change in the delivery status associated with the unique tracking

identifier in response to refunding the postage purchase transaction, wherein the

postage-issuing

computer system checks for the change in the delivery, status during a period of time

after the postage purchase transaction has been refunded, (Col. 2, lines 3-18 providing

a signal).  Whitehouse discloses this limitation in an analogous art for the purpose of

showing that a signal is provided indicative of the status of means for calculating postage.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to disclose the limitation above with the motivation of determining the most up to date status of a refund.

As per claims 55/56, neither Kovlakas, Williams et al nor Gordon do not specifically disclose the following, however does disclose a system for issuing a refund for returned items in col. 10, line 61.

However, Whitehouse discloses:

the period of time comprises a predetermined number of days/months, (obvious with Col. 19, lines 20-23, month, col. 20, lines 16-21, day).

Whitehouse discloses the above limitations in an analogous art for the purpose of showing that the postal service can deal with a plurality of postage purchase transactions a given month or day.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention for the period of time to comprise a predetermined number of days/months with the motivation of processing postage purchase transactions for predetermined periods.

7.      Claims 16, 19, 20, 28, 36, 37, 40, 41  are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as

being unpatentable over Kovlakas (US 20030089765 A1), and further in view of

Williams et al (US 7774284), and further in view of Whitehouse (US 6,005,945), and

further in view of Gordon (6,527, 128), and further in view of Lewis et al (US 6233565).


        As per claim 16, Kovlakas discloses:

wherein the information stored for the first postage purchase transaction further

includes a first destination zip code, a first service class, a first postage amount,

and the first unique postage indicium for the first postage purchase transaction, ([0027]

FIG. 5 is a flow chart for the recording and upload transactions of postal security device

45 and computer 47 of FIG. 3. In block 200 the print job begins, i.e., the printing of mail

piece 21 including indicia 24. Then the program goes to decision block 201. Block 201

determines whether or not the print data is mail piece and postage information. If block

201 determines that the print data is not mail piece and postage information, the

program goes back to the input of block 201. If block 201 determines that the print data

is mail piece and postage information, the program goes to block 202. Block 202 will

encrypt and save information that "uniquely" identifies mail piece 21, including

information related to the mailer or personal computer meter such as the date and time

that indicia 24 is produced;).

        Kovlakas does not disclose a service class or a mail piece weight, however,

Lewis discloses in col. 19, lines 5-18 "Additional information may be required such as

the Class of postage by which the mail piece(s) will be shipped and the method of

calculating the postage. The system may be established so that the user selects

Calculate Weight, whereupon the number of sheets of paper being mailed and a paper

weight (as indicated on the paper packaging (e.g., envelope, box, etc.)) are entered. A

suitable application will then calculate the total weight by referring to an algorithm

resident in the downloaded client software, for example, multiplying the single sheet

paper weight by the number of sheets indicated. The result is then added to the weight

of the packaging (e.g., an envelope) via a table look-up. The postage for that weight and

class is then determined and the list of addresses is updated." It would have been

obvious to combine Kovlakas and Lewis to disclose a service class or a mail piece

weight.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

applicant's invention to disclose a service class or a mail piece weight with the

motivation of including standard mailpiece data with the postage purchase transaction.

Neither Kovlakas nor Lewis specifically disclose the following, however, Whitehouse

discloses in the Abstract, lines 10-15, a database of information concerning user

accounts [plural], and also, in Col. 28, lines 21-23, general postal indicia based on a

plurality of user accounts, and also in Col. 25, lines 5-17, request a refund/issue a

refund.  It therefore would be obvious to combine the teachings of Kovlakas, Lewis and

Whitehouse to disclose the following:

wherein the information stored for the second postage purchase transaction further

includes a

second destination zip code, a second service class, a second postage amount, and the second unique postage indicium for the second postage purchase transaction.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in an analogous art for the purpose of showing that the postal service can deal with a plurality of postage purchase transactions for a plurality of user accounts, and does not issue refunds for postage indicia that was previously used.


Neither Kovlakas, Lewis nor Whitehouse disclose a comparison between first and second transactions or wherein the first postage purchase transaction is refunded only in response, to further determining that the first destination zip code, the first service *class,* and the first postage amount for the first postage purchase transaction are the same as the second destination zip code, the second service class, and the second postage amount for the postage purchase transaction, however, in the abstract, Gordon discloses that counterfeit indicia are identified through a comparison of the stored information in the master log database with information scanned from the mailpiece itself, and that counterfeits may also be detected by recognizing the multiple occurrences of identical indicia. It therefore would be obvious to combine the teachings of Kovlakas, Lewis, Whitehouse and Gordon to disclose first and second transactions with the motivation of showing that multiple transaction data are detected for refund processing purposes and wherein the first postage purchase transaction is refunded only in response, to further determining that the first destination zip code, the first service *class,* and the first postage amount for the first postage purchase transaction

are the same as the second destination zip code, the second service class, and the

second postage amount for the postage purchase transaction.

As per claims 19/20, Kovlakas does not specifically disclose wherein the refund inquiry

is received from an account administrator that operates a user interface at the postage-

issuing computer system, however, Lewis discloses in Col. 25, line 46, a system's

administrator.  It would have been obvious to combine Kovlakas and Lewis to disclose

wherein the refund inquiry is received from an account administrator that operates a

user interface at the postage-issuing computer system.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

applicant's invention to disclose wherein the refund inquiry is received from an account

administrator that operates a user interface at the postage-issuing computer system,

with the motivation of providing an entity to take charge of processing.

As per claim 28, the combination of Kovlakas, Willimas et al, Whitehouse and

Gordon disclose all limitations as discussed with respect to claim 23  above, and further:

Kovlakas discloses data processing circuitry …(abstract, processor).

Kovlakas does not specifically disclose the following however, Lewis discloses:

a database coupled to a postage-issuing computer system, (Lewis, abstract,

transaction database);

a communications link …(Lewis, abstract, communications link)

a master tracking computer system connected..to the postage-issuing computer system

through the communications link, (col. 6, lines 63-65, master PSD); and

Lewis discloses the above limitations with the motivation of showing components used to process postage transaction.

As per claim 36, Kovlakas does not specifically disclose further comprising displaying the information stored for the plurality of postage purchase transactions at the postage-issuing computer system in response to the duplicative postage purchase transaction inquiry, however, Lewis does disclose a refund process where customer requests a full refund and a display screen assists the customer in doing so as shown in Col. 17, lines 41-66.  It therefore would be obvious to combine Kovlakas and Lewis to disclose further comprising displaying the information stored for the plurality of postage purchase transactions at the postage-issuing computer system in response to the duplicative postage purchase transaction inquiry.

It would have been obvious to disclose further comprising displaying the information stored for the plurality of postage purchase transactions at the postage-issuing computer system in response to the duplicative postage purchase transaction inquiry with the motivation of providing a user with visual means to request and process a refund transaction.

As per claim 37, Kovlakas discloses: wherein the information stored for each of the plurality of postage purchase transactions further includes respective dates, respective destination zip, respective postage amounts, and the respective unique postage indicia for each of the plurality of postage purchase transactions, ([0027] FIG. 5

is a flow chart for the recording and upload transactions of postal security device 45 and

computer 47 of FIG. 3. In block 200 the print job begins, i.e., the printing of mail piece

21 including indicia 24. Then the program goes to decision block 201. Block 201

determines whether or not the print data is mail piece and postage information. If block

201 determines that the print data is not mail piece and postage information, the

program goes back to the input of block 201. If block 201 determines that the print data

is mail piece and postage information, the program goes to block 202. Block 202 will

encrypt and save information that "uniquely" identifies mail piece 21, including

information related to the mailer or personal computer meter such as the date and time

that indicia 24 is produced;).

Kovlakas does not disclose a service class or a mail piece weight, however,

Lewis discloses in col. 19, lines 5-18 "Additional information may be required such as

the Class of postage by which the mail piece(s) will be shipped and the method of

calculating the postage. The system may be established so that the user selects

Calculate Weight, whereupon the number of sheets of paper being mailed and a paper

weight (as indicated on the paper packaging (e.g., envelope, box, etc.)) are entered. A

suitable application will then calculate the total weight by referring to an algorithm

resident in the downloaded client software, for example, multiplying the single sheet

paper weight by the number of sheets indicated. The result is then added to the weight

of the packaging (e.g., an envelope) via a table look-up. The postage for that weight and

class is then determined and the list of addresses is updated." It would have been

obvious to combine Kovlakas and Lewis to disclose a service class or a mail piece weight.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to disclose a service class or a mail piece weight with the motivation of including standard mailpiece data with the postage purchase transaction.

As per claims 40, 41, Kovlakas does not specifically disclose wherein the duplicative postage transaction inquiry is received from an account administrator that operates a user interface at the postage-issuing; computer system, however, Lewis discloses in Col. 25, line 46, a system's administrator. It would have been obvious to combine Kovlakas and Lewis to disclose wherein the duplicative postage transaction inquiry is received from an account administrator that operates a user interface at the postage-issuing; computer system.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to disclose wherein the refund inquiry is received from an account administrator that operates a user interface at the postage-issuing computer system, with the motivation of providing an entity to take charge of processing.

### *Response to Arguments*

8.      Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 3-6, 8-9, 12-24, 26-38, 40-42, 44,

45, and 55-56 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of

rejection.

### *Conclusion*

9.      Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in

this Office action.  Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**.  See MPEP

§ 706.07(a).  Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37

CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE

MONTHS from the mailing date of this action.  In the event a first reply is filed within

TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not

mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the

shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any

extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

the advisory action.  In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later

than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the

examiner should be directed to Akiba K Robinson-Boyce whose telephone number is

571-272-6734.  The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 9am-5:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's

supervisor, John Hayes can be reached on 571-272-6708.  The fax phone number for

the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the

•Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system, Status information for

published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status

information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For

more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you

have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business

Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO

Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call

800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or

proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-305-

3900.


A. R. B.
August 1, 2011

/Akiba K Robinson-Boyce/

Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3628